

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS APPROACH



Raising Graduation and College Going Rates

COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL CASE STUDIES

Rita Axelroth

August 2009



Because Every Child Deserves Every Chance





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About the Coalition for Community Schools

The Coalition for Community Schools, housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership, is an alliance of national, state and local organizations in education K–16, youth development, community planning and development, family support, health and human services, government, and philanthropy as well as national, state, and local community school networks. The Coalition advocates for community schools as a strategy to leverage local resources and programs, changing the look and feel of the traditional school structure to best meet the needs of children and families in the 21st century.

About the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)

NASSP is the preeminent organization of and national voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring school leaders from across the United States and more than 45 countries around the world. Its mission is to promote excellence in school leadership.



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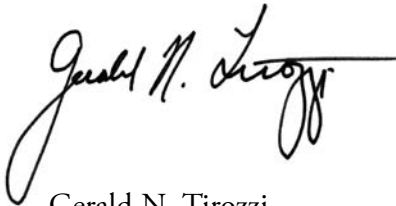
Web site: www.NASSP.org

PREFACE

A decade into the 21st Century, we see a growing interest among school leaders for a more holistic approach to education. Community schools are an alternative to an outdated public education system that disaggregates a challenging curriculum from the other important factors that influence student success. To raise academic achievement and reengage students so they stay in school, get good grades, and graduate prepared for post secondary education and a career with a future, we need more than what a 20th Century system has to offer.

Community schools as evidenced in this report implement many of the strategies aligned with *Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*. These community schools get their strength from the local community as they create personalized environments, ensure a relevant and rigorous curriculum, and build sustainable partnerships that put a caring adult in a student's life before, during, and after school and during the summer.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals and the Coalition for Community Schools are pleased to present a review of eight high schools that have embraced the community school approach and are showing results in student success that include reduction of dropout rates, increase in college acceptance, and more. These schools from around the nation in Bronx, NY; Chicago, IL; Cincinnati, OH; Indianapolis, IN; Philadelphia, PA; Portland, OR; and Tukwila, WA, have found a way to reconnect with youth, enriching their educational experiences through the partnerships that make up the community school strategy.



Gerald N. Tirozzi
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Introduction

What is a Community School?

A community school is a place and a set of partnerships between the school and community resources. The community school strategy integrates academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and civic engagement to improve student learning and to develop stronger families and healthier communities.

Community schools are centers of the community—open to everyone—all day, every day, evenings, and weekends. Families, local government, higher education institutions, businesses, community-based organizations, and local citizens are all involved.

Key Features of Successful Community School High Schools

- ▶ Lead partner organization
- ▶ Community school coordinator
- ▶ Robust, reciprocal partnerships
- ▶ Focused leadership
- ▶ Critical programs and services
 - After-school, weekend, and summer programs
 - Academic support
 - Mentoring
 - College and career preparation
 - University partnerships
 - Culturally relevant programs
 - Parent engagement
 - Health services and education
 - Youth and community nutrition
- ▶ Shared results: graduating college-ready students

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Turning the Curve on High School Dropouts

The challenges facing our nation's youth are great. Dropout rates are unacceptably high and too few young people enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training. Too many children live in poverty, while the achievement gap for poor and minority students continues. Truancy, juvenile arrest, and juvenile victims of crime are on the rise.* These consequences have lifelong, damaging effects on youth.

This report tells the stories of eight community high schools across the country that are changing this picture. They are turning the curve on high school achievement and preparing students for success in college, careers, and life. Robust partnerships, focused leadership, and the provision of critical programs and services, as seen at these schools, are leading to positive changes in students' behavior, academic achievement, and preparation for post-secondary success. For example, since graduating its first class in 2006, Community Links High School has maintained a 99 percent graduation rate, with an 85 percent college-going rate. George Washington Community High School has raised its attendance from 88 percent to 96.2 percent in just two years, and 100 percent of the school's 2009 graduates were accepted to college. Cincinnati Public Schools, which made a commitment in 2002 to make every school a Community Learning Center, has seen its district-wide graduation rate improve from 51 percent to 82 percent over the last 6 years. These community schools are helping move our country towards the Obama Administration's goal of having the highest proportion of college graduates in the world by 2020.

The eight featured schools represent some of the poorest and most ethnically diverse schools in the country, many with a large number of English language learners. Across the schools, at least 60 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, while most of the schools have rates of 90 percent or more.

* Over 1.2 million American students drop out of high school each year. Half of these dropouts come from just 15 percent of high schools in our nation's high-poverty neighborhoods. Nearly a third of all public high school freshman—and closer to half of all African American, Hispanic, and Native American students—fail to graduate with their class. Forty to 60 percent of all students say they feel disconnected from school: unsupported, unsafe, academically unchallenged, and disengaged. Among children living in urban areas, 49 percent (9.7 million) live in low-income families. In the last three decades, U.S. racial and ethnic diversity has significantly increased. Over 20 percent of school-aged children in the U.S. speak a language other than English at home. Truancy, juvenile arrest for drug-related offenses, and juvenile victims of gunshot wounds run rampant in many of our nation's cities. Juvenile crimes peak between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. on school days. (Swanson 2004; Yazzie-Mintz 2006; Douglas-Hall and Chau, NCCP 2008; NCES 2007; US Dept. of Justice 1999).

PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUCCESS

Yet, the young people at these sites have an advantage over many urban high school students. Their schools and communities have come together to offer safe, positive, and constructive environments before, during, and after school. Underpinning the success of these high schools are partnerships—school, community, non-profit, higher education, local government and business leaders—working together to provide much needed resources and opportunities for their young people. With high expectations for all students, these community schools are pulling together both financial and human resources to provide the support that students need to achieve.

Community schools serve as hubs whose partner agencies and organizations collaborate to address the specific needs and interests of its students, families, and other members of the community. At most community schools, a lead partner organization helps provide and coordinate the many programs and services at the school. These lead partners usually employ a full-time coordinator on site who serves as the “link” between the community school’s diverse constituencies. For example, at George Washington Community High School, lead partner Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center provides funding for a school/community director who works with more than 50 local organizations to ensure that student and community needs are met on site.

Strong partnerships are reciprocal: community school partners capitalize on each other’s resources, maintain constant communication, continually shape programs and services to address student and local needs, and share accountability for results. In most cases, a governing body made of students, parents, school staff, and partner representatives meet regularly to ensure that these requirements are met.

INTEGRATED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

At community schools, real-world problem solving is incorporated into the core academic curriculum, engaging students through hands-on lessons and opportunities to contribute to their school and community. Academic opportunities continue into the after school hours, weekends, and summers, and community school coordinators work with teachers to link school day with out-of-school learning. Community adults and undergraduate volunteers often serve as tutors. Seven of the schools featured

have partnerships with local colleges or universities. Sayre High School represents the strongest higher education partnership, with more than 350 University of Pennsylvania students serving as tutors, mentors, classroom fellows, and program leaders at the school, as part of a university-assisted community schools approach.

Community schools encourage and support students in planning and preparing for post-secondary success. The high schools featured offer specialized college and career-related activities after school and/or during the school day. Some schools connect their students directly to college-level courses, such as Community Links High School’s *College Bridge* program, through which all students take classes for dual credit at nearby institutions. Other schools, such as Fannie Lou Hamer High School, focus on post-secondary preparation through a hands-on curriculum that promotes research, problem solving, and communication skills. Many of the sites have college advisors who provide individualized support to students and parents. Volunteers from the community come in to provide one-on-one mentoring relationships. For example, Oyler Community Learning Center has more than 350 mentors, from 65 different organizations, supporting its students on a weekly basis.

Many of these sites promote career exploration and job readiness through established internship programs for their students. At the Little Village Lawndale High School Campus, lead partner Enlace Chicago offers stipend based programs for nearly 100 students focusing on students’ individual career-based aspirations. Enlace has partnered with more than 16 local organizations to support high school interns.

To meet the needs of ethnically diverse student bodies, the schools partner with local organizations to provide culturally specific services. For example, at Parkrose High School, the Black Student Union and Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (M.E.Ch.A) are two among many of the youth groups supported by city or statewide cultural programs. Community school staff are also engaging parents through culturally relevant programs so that they can be partners in their child(ren)’s education and better access resources for their families. At Foster High School, community liaisons work with community school staff to improve communication between parents and the school, particularly for Somali and Spanish speaking families.

When basic needs are met, students, principals, and teachers can focus on teaching and learning. Community schools collaborate with both public and private health care providers to offer health services, including free physicals, dental and vision screenings, and mental health support on site. Six high schools in this study have developed school-based health centers. Most offer programs aimed at improving student and community nutrition, such as the youth-led farmers' markets at both Sayre and Fannie Lou Hamer High Schools.

CROSS-BOUNDARY LEADERSHIP

School principals are integral to the success of community schools, and they work with lead partner organizations to leverage significant resources. The principals at the schools interviewed in this study understand that *schools can't do it alone* and reach out to local organizations, businesses, universities, and other key stakeholders, inviting them into the school to share their resources and expertise. A community school principal engages families, staff, partners and the community into the life of the school. As the community school site manager for Parkrose High stated, "Having our principal as a 100 percent supporter is the key reason for the success we've had."

At many sites—particularly Indianapolis, Portland, Chicago, and Tukwila—school superintendents have championed community school efforts, providing invaluable support as public advocates and district partners. During his time as the CEO of Chicago Public Schools, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan supported the development of 150 community schools throughout Chicago.

Local community members also provide critical leadership for community schools. At Oylar Community Learning Center, for example, local business and community leaders convinced the Board of Education that adding high school grades to create a pre-K–12 program was essential for the community to succeed. The leaders at these featured high schools understand that *strong schools require strong communities and strong communities require strong schools*.

BUILDING YOUR COMMUNITY SCHOOL

If you are interested in turning your high school into a community school, these tips will help you get started:

- ▶ Reach out to potential partners and explore how a community school partnership could be mutually beneficial.
- ▶ Capitalize on each partner's strengths and align them with the goals of the school and community.
- ▶ Focus on bringing in partners who can prepare your students for post-secondary success—individualized tutoring, mentoring, and job skills training are essential, and they require significant human resources.
- ▶ Keep communication open and strong, and be flexible when challenges arise.
- ▶ Open the doors of the school to the entire community, and reach out to parents so they can better support their child(ren)'s learning, while furthering their own education.
- ▶ Share responsibility with partners for your success *and* your challenges.
- ▶ Be patient—deep, systemic change takes time. But don't forget to celebrate the little accomplishments along the way. ❖

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Case Study 1

George Washington Community High School

Indianapolis, Indiana

Student Population: 783 (grades 7–12)

Demographics:

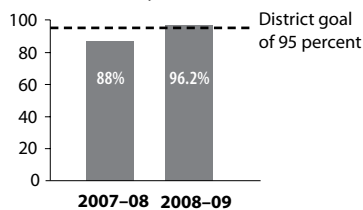
- ▶ 31% Hispanic
- ▶ 24% African-American
- ▶ 41% White
- ▶ 4% Multiracial
- ▶ 91% Free and Reduced Lunch

The neighborhoods surrounding GWCHS have the fastest growing Hispanic population across Indianapolis. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that 43% of adults age 25 and older living in Washington's target area have earned a high school diploma and about 5% have attended college.

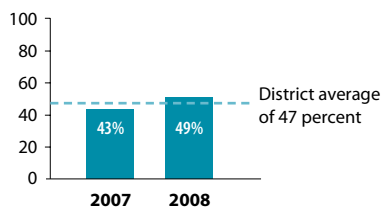
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SELECTED RESULTS

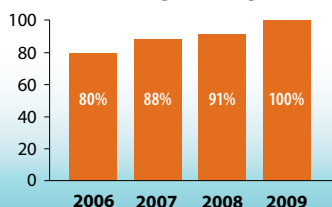
Percent of Daily Student Attendance



Percent of Students Graduating



Percent Enrolling in College



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George Washington Community High School Indianapolis, Indiana

BACKGROUND

It's hard to imagine that Washington High was once an academically failing school that was closed by the Indianapolis Public Schools District. Today, the renamed George Washington Community High School (GWCHS) is alive with activity and its students are thriving.

The transition didn't happen overnight—and it wouldn't have happened at all if it weren't for the powerful commitment and intensity of support from the community. Neighborhood residents envisioned a center where the community collectively focuses on improving graduation rates and preparing young people for post-secondary education.

The neighborhood surrounding the school has a history of low educational attainment. According to School/Community Director Jim Grim, "Our community-wide goal since reopening the school has been to reverse that trend."

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Meeting Academic, Health, and Social Needs

Grim, whose salary is provided by the school's lead partner, the Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center, works with more than 50 local organizations to ensure that student and community needs are met on site. And this year, according to Principal Keith Burke, the partners received the largest Federal Full-Service Community School grant—\$2.4 million out of a total \$4.9 million distributed across the country.

Services at GWCHS include tutoring, mentoring, college and career preparedness, health, mental health, community service, fitness, GED, English-as-a-Second Language, cultural enrichment, parent engagement, and violence prevention. The school is open to students and their families until 7 p.m. after school, weekends, and summers. Partner representatives meet monthly with school officials, students, and parents to collaborate and align efforts with academic achievement goals.

Their partner, the Eli Lilly Corporation, provides critical support through tutoring and mentoring, a science labs program, and funding for community health education as well as nurse practitioners at the school's Teen Health Clinic. Counseling and case management services are provided for students and their families by Midtown Community Health. These direct services allow the faculty and staff to give more energy to teaching and learning.



PARTNERSHIPS: Focus on College and Career Preparation

The Learning Communities Initiative at GWCHS serves as the primary framework to prepare students for post-secondary success. The heart of such efforts focuses on exposing all 783 GWCHS students—as well as 216 students in grades 5 through 8 at the feeder elementary schools—to USA Funds' *Unlock the Future* and Scholarship America's *Scholarshop* curricula.

Service scholars from Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) are trained to implement this college-prep curriculum, which exposes youth to their individual talents and skills, related potential occupations, and relevant post-secondary education opportunities. Scholars also work with the 150 students who are in GWCHS's AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) classes after school, to provide additional mentoring experiences and individualized tutoring. Principal Burke has proposed expanding AVID principles such as Cornell note-taking, basic study skills, and Socratic seminar school-wide next year. Washington's teachers routinely stay after school and provide extra resources. As Grim says, "Our teachers understand and support the notion of a school supporting a community and a community supporting a school."

Grim also notes, "The goal is to blanket our entire community with consistent high school graduation and college-going messages to provide parents and youth with relevant, engaging information and tools for success, increasingly important in our global economy."

Community partner, LaPlaza, sponsors a program called Tu Futuro for GWCHS's Hispanic high school students, a mother/daughter program for Hispanic



middle school girls, and a new father/son component. These programs focus on culturally relevant academic support, graduation, and post-secondary education goals.

Additional programs at GWCHS feature career exploration. The ACE Mentoring Program—sponsored by local architecture and construction companies—exposes youth to construction management, architecture, and engineering careers. The Greater Indianapolis

Chamber of Commerce has also placed a full-time graduation coach at GWCHS who mentors 40 students identified as most at-risk, guiding them in strategies to address individual barriers to learning and providing them a personal vision for high school graduation and post-secondary education.

LEADERSHIP

When GWCHS received the Federal Full-Service Community School grant in 2008, IPS Superintendent Dr. Eugene White thanked the Mary Rigg Center and other community partners for recognizing that it takes "the entire village" to help students be successful. "The challenges our families face, particularly in urban schools, require addressing basic needs and supports so that our youth are better able to learn, thrive, and succeed in the ever-changing landscape we are faced with in public education and society today," he said.

Principal Burke points to the school's college-bound graduates as evidence of success: 91 percent of GWCHS's 2008 graduates pursued post-secondary education, as compared to 88 percent of 2007 graduates and 80 percent the previous year. In 2006, the school's first graduating class had the district's highest rate with 60 percent graduating. But under the state's new graduation formula, it dropped to 43 percent in 2007 and was 49 percent in 2008, he explained. "We know if we can get them to graduate, we can get them to college. That is our challenge as a community and together we will overcome [barriers to graduation]."

RESULTS

GWCHS and their partners have also focused on raising the attendance rate. Over the last two years, attendance has risen 8 percent, reaching 96 percent in 2008–09 and exceeding the district goal of 95 percent. Under the new state formula, GWCHS had a 49 percent graduation rate in 2008 (compared to the district-wide average of 47 percent), while an additional 20 percent of seniors remained in school. In 2009, 100 percent of GWCHS's graduates have been accepted into a post-secondary institution. For several years, GWCHS's Dollars for Scholars Board has organized fund-raising activities to raise student scholarship funds. For 2009 graduates, funds total over \$62,000. ❖

Case Study 2

Fannie Lou Hamer High School

Bronx, New York

Student Population: 500

Demographics:

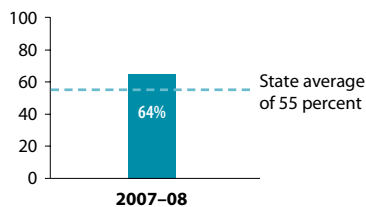
- ▶ 66% Hispanic or Latino
- ▶ 32% African-American
- ▶ 1% Asian or Native American
- ▶ 90% Free and Reduced Lunch
- ▶ 23% Special Education
- ▶ 10% English Language Learners
- ▶ 11% "Over-Age" Students (one of the highest predictors of dropping out)

Fannie Lou is located in one of the poorest congressional districts in the country and was founded to work with historically underserved students.

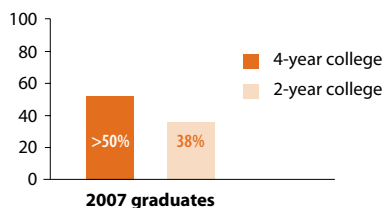
<http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/12/X682>

SELECTED RESULTS

Percent of Students Graduating



Percent Enrolling in College*



* Percent of graduates who planned to enroll

Fannie Lou Hamer High School

Bronx, New York

BACKGROUND

Fannie Lou Hamer High School was founded in 1994, in partnership with the Coalition of Essential Schools, as one of the first small high schools in the Bronx. In 2005, Principal Nancy Mann reached out to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) to acquire additional services for her 500 students and their families.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships

Fannie Lou offers its students a curriculum that emphasizes the development of research, problem solving, and communication skills expected of those pursuing a post-secondary education. "Freshman Seminar" delivers workshops in time and stress management, study skills, planning, and goal setting to help students transition from 8th to 9th grade. Moreover, the school's academic program stresses intellectual development and political/social involvement in society.

In 9th and 10th grade, students receive a hands-on, interdisciplinary curriculum. A community service requirement places these students at local elementary schools, hospitals, and food pantries, for which they receive academic credit. The 11th and 12th grade curriculum is more discipline-based, with a strong focus on college preparation.

As part of a required internship, students receive resume and interview skills and are placed with a local non-profit or corporation. Fannie Lou also offers looping, which means that students stay with the same core of six or seven teachers for two years. In addition to the relationships they build with their teachers, students have four-year advisors who help guide them through their academic requirements, provide connections between their school day and after school learning, and reach out to parents.



A member of the NY Performance Standards Consortium, Fannie Lou has a portfolio graduation requirement, which exempts its students from several state exams. The portfolio emphasizes writing and critical thinking skills, and students present to a committee seven times before graduating. Principal Mann comments, "We've found that this is a better way to work with the academically-challenged, because it really immerses students in their work. Students often come back [after college] and say that the portfolios really helped them in their freshman year, especially with writing assignments."

CAS's EXCEL program, Creating Empowered Leaders, offers students an individualized higher education track. This program consists of several core components designed to prepare youth for college and a career: financial literacy, career exploration and goal setting, academic support, social support, and scholarship support. While only a select number of Fannie Lou students are currently enrolled in the full program, the EXCEL curriculum is being rolled into the 11th grade advisory period (similar to a home room), so that all students will benefit from the workshops.

A partnership with NYU offers summer courses in philosophy, where Fannie Lou students can sharpen their writing skills as well as gain a greater perspective of college life. The school and CAS partners also offer numerous college trips throughout the year. Other higher education partners include Hostos Community College, National Academy for Excellent Teaching at Teachers College, and Bard College.

PARTNERSHIPS: A Focus on Physical, Social, and Emotional Needs

Children's Aid Society (CAS) operates the Bronx Family Center, three blocks from the school, which provides comprehensive health services and health education for Fannie Lou students and their families, including a specialized teen clinic. A partnership with the Helen Keller Institute also offers free vision screenings. Facilitated by a strong relationship with the principal, CAS has successfully integrated many initiatives into the school day as well. For example, a health educator provides lessons and services for students throughout the day and is helping to address the alarmingly high rate of teen pregnancy in the community. CAS has added two full-time social workers to the school's robust counseling staff; one of them leads an Attendance Improvement and Dropout Prevention Program, working with students individually, in groups, and with parents.

The extended day program at Fannie Lou focuses on youth development through academic, social and vocational activities. Through the Culinary Arts Initiative, for example, CAS is bringing nutrition education into the school day and after school. Students run a monthly youth market, with produce provided by the Council on the Environment of New York City.

"In a neighborhood that is full of gangs and violence," reflects CAS's Community School Director Denise Santana Montes, "Fannie Lou is a relatively calm place. The students are happy to be here, and they love being part of the many activities that the community school has to offer."

Fannie Lou's Youth Council is a group of students who receive additional training and leadership opportunities through CAS. For instance, on Advocacy Day, these students spoke directly to elected officials about the necessity for after school programming and funding for education programs in general. Several students have interned in elected officials' offices during the summer.

LEADERSHIP

Fannie Lou was founded upon community school principles, and Principal Mann has continually built partnerships that are aligned with the school's vision of preparing students for post-secondary success. "Our commitment is to the academically-challenged," Mann reflects. "We have an idea of what the necessary components are to work with these students: comprehensive support and opportunities, strong relationships with teachers, and rigorous academic work. And it's working with our students."

RESULTS

On its 2007–08 Progress Report from the NYC Department of Education, Fannie Lou met 100 percent of its improvement targets from the year before. With an overall score of 90.7 (measures in four areas: school environment, student performance, student progress, and closing the achievement gap), Fannie Lou was in the 97 percentile of all high schools citywide. The four-year graduation rate at Fannie Lou is around 64 percent, compared to the state average of 55 percent. Among 2006–07 graduates, more than half planned on attending a four-year college, while an additional 38 percent planned on attending a two-year college. ❖

Case Study 3

Oyler Community Learning Center Cincinnati, Ohio

Oyler Community Learning Center

Cincinnati, Ohio

Student Population: 870 (pre-K–12)

Demographics:

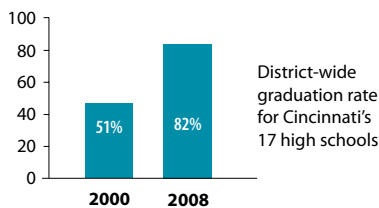
- ▶ 54% White
- ▶ 42% African-American
- ▶ 4% Multi-Racial
- ▶ 79% Free and Reduced Lunch

More than one quarter of the community surrounding Oyler is illiterate.

<http://oyler.cps-k12.org>

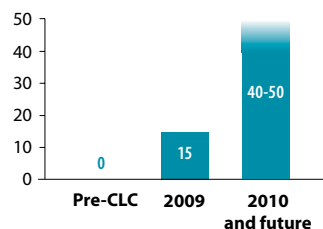
SELECTED RESULTS

Percent of Students Graduating



Note: In 2002, Cincinnati Public Schools made a commitment to make every school a Community Learning Center.

Annual Number of Oyler HS Graduates



BACKGROUND

The Appalachian community of Lower Price Hill lies in an industrial area along the Ohio River, where homes are interspersed with factories and environmental quality is very poor. The community's Oyler Elementary School was in danger of closing, due to decreasing enrollment and poor academic outcomes, but families refused to leave their homes. Through community engagement, Cincinnati Public Schools Consultant Darlene Kamine mobilized local residents to create a vision for a new school—a Community Learning Center. The effort was supported by a district-wide goal set in 2002 to make every Cincinnati school a Community Learning Center.

During their meetings on rebuilding the elementary school, community members insisted that a high school be built. For generations, nearly 85 percent of students would graduate from Oyler in the 8th grade and that was the end of their formal education. Today, Oyler leads a hugely successful effort to recover youth from the streets back into the classroom.



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Removing Barriers to Learning

When delivering *The State of Oyler Address* in 2007, Principal Craig Hockenberry stated: “The vision for our school took years of planning and partnerships. We had to tap into resources and experience beyond what we as educators are capable of coordinating.”

Oyler Community Learning Center is now co-located with a Boys & Girls Club and a school-based health center, in partnership with the City Health Department, providing much needed services to students from pre-kindergarten through the 12th grade. The Boys & Girls Club provides a full-time resource coordinator to manage and supervise the many partnerships and programs during and beyond the school day and year round.

The Boys & Girls Club and the Cincinnati Recreation Center operate after school and evening programs for students and adults. With help from additional partners, the Boys & Girls Club opened a Teen Center at Oyler, which is open from 2–7 p.m. and which offers academic tutoring, job training, and college resources as well as access to computers, video games, and a lounge and study area.

Students come to the “Kid’s Café” for free hot meals in the evening, provided by the Freestore Foodbank. Full health services, including dental care and vision screenings, are available to all students. Mental health is also provided, including a psychiatrist from Cincinnati Children’s Hospital who comes to the school every other week to work with children and families.

Principal Hockenberry has led a massive effort with his teaching staff to stay aligned with the district's strategic plan. In 2007, Oyler implemented Data Folders, which include current data on how students in every grade are doing on benchmark assessments. Teams and individual teachers routinely meet with students and their parents to talk about specific strengths and weaknesses. Teachers also use the data to help improve their own instructional programs.

PARTNERSHIPS: Focus on Mentoring and College Preparation

Through the school's HOSTS Program, more than 350 mentors, from 65 different organizations, provide individualized attention and support to Oyler students on a weekly basis. The Cincinnati Youth Collaborative (CYC), for example, matches volunteers with students in grades 3 through 12 for one-to-one mentoring and tutoring. Mentoring begins at a young age at Oyler: Adopt A Class Foundation, started by a local businessman whose company headquarters are around the corner from Oyler, connects dozens of area businesses to every pre-K–8th grade classroom for a full year of mentoring activities including a spring outing to the Adopter's business.

Individualized support from college advisors prepares Oyler students—and their parents—for post-secondary success. This includes a College Access Center and college campus tours for students beginning in the 7th grade.



Oyler also partners with Jobs for Cincinnati Graduates, a non-profit that helps develop the social and work skills required for success in school and career.

LEADERSHIP

When planning for this Community Learning Center, it was a grass roots political group—community members, the local community council, parents, local business and church leaders, members of Leadership Cincinnati, and the Urban Appalachian Council—who collected signatures from community youth and convinced the Board of Education to open a high school. These individuals continue to play a strong role in bringing resources to Oyler.

As the high school program was being developed at Oyler, Hockenberry began “re-capturing” students by offering an online program for young people that had either dropped out or needed some type of alternative schedule in order to graduate. Students were able to move at their own speed with the assistance of Oyler faculty and the safety net of support services provided by the school's co-located partners. The first online class had 14 graduates: eight went on to college, all with scholarships. In three years, Oyler has re-captured nearly 150 students.

“It's really a Cinderella story,” Kamine reflects. “But we could have never done it without the community driving it, fueled by their understanding of the inextricable link between the success of our schools and the success of our city. The repositioning of schools as the centers of community has resulted in the realignment of resources that allow for sustainable partnerships accountable to shared school-community outcomes. Students, teachers, families and communities are setting their own goals, selecting their own partners, and finding their own pathways to success. This has proven to be a much more genuine, embedded transformational approach than the traditional provision of services that are done to and for schools. Together we are leveling the playing field for our children and making graduation, college, and a career a real possibility.”

RESULTS

Since the full high school program started two years ago, Oyler has not had a single dropout. “This year we are expecting about 15 graduates and then, every year after that, we expect 40-50 students,” says Hockenberry. “This means that, by [2010], there will be more high school graduates in Lower Price Hill in one year than we think have ever graduated in almost 85 years.”

Many other success stories are happening across Cincinnati Public Schools. At the same time as the school district committed to making every school a Community Learning Center, they also engaged in a \$1 billion Facilities Master Plan. This confluence has provided the opportunity to rebuild every school through an extensive community engagement process, which is making a dramatic difference for Cincinnati's young people: from 2000 to 2008, the district's 17 high schools have seen their overall graduation rate improve from 51 percent to 82 percent. ❖

Case Study 4

Parkrose High School

Portland, Oregon

Student Population: 1,100

Demographics:

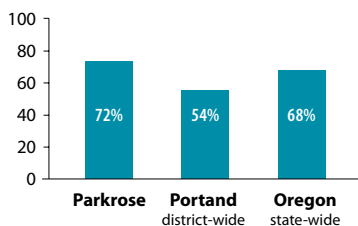
- ▶ 50% Caucasian
- ▶ 18% Asian/Pacific Islander
- ▶ 16% African American
- ▶ 14% Hispanic
- ▶ 2% Native American
- ▶ 12% English Language Learners
- ▶ 61% Free and Reduced Lunch
- ▶ School's mobility rate hovers around 50%
- ▶ 85% of students in SUN programs exhibit one or more academic risk factors

SUN recruits and maintains an ethnically diverse group of staff and partners that reflects the school's diversity—staff speak at least 8 languages other than English.

<http://hs.parkrose.k12.or.us/>

SELECTED RESULTS

Percent of Students Graduating in 2008



www.communityschools.org

Parkrose High School

Portland, Oregon

BACKGROUND

When Parkrose High School was rebuilt 12 years ago, it was designed as a community center. Classrooms were modernized and the school received many special use rooms, fully equipped for student and community programming (e.g., arts and media classrooms, a large auditorium, and a pool).

After school and on the weekends, more than half of Parkrose's 1,100 high school students—and hundreds of community adults—are participating in community school programs. As a result, test scores, attendance, and behavior have all improved. The supports and resources making this achievement possible are coordinated by the City of Portland and Multnomah County's Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) initiative and the school's lead agency, Portland Parks and Recreation.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Youth Leadership and Academic Enrichment

While SUN Community School (SUN CS) programs and services at Parkrose are open to anyone in the neighborhood, outreach is targeted at minority students and those at risk of academic failure. SUN CS has brought together the resources of more than 32 community agencies, 12 business partners, and hundreds of volunteers to connect Parkrose students and families with the services they need.

Like many community schools, extended-day activities at Parkrose are often student-driven. SUN CS has been particularly effective in creating an environment that fosters youth leadership. When a group of interested students request to start a new program, SUN CS helps find the instructors or agencies to provide support. Culturally specific student groups at Parkrose include M.E.Ch.A (Latino Leadership), N.A.Y.A. (Native American

Leadership), the Black Student Union, and a new Pan-Asian Leadership group. Students plan fund raisers and host community-wide cultural celebrations. Trevor Todd, SUN CS site manager for Parkrose, reflects, "This is one of the most important things we've been able to accomplish



at Parkrose. We've given non-traditional kids a voice and an opportunity for leadership."

Parkrose's programs also include culturally specific academic support, mentoring, and college preparation. Oregon Leadership Institute, for example, provides a Latino-specific college readiness and mentorship program. House of Umoja provides a youth gang support group for African-American boys. This group complements other efforts at Parkrose to engage youth at risk of gang involvement through leadership development, constructive conflict resolution, and opportunities for service projects.

SUN CS hires high school students throughout the year to gain career skills and leadership opportunities. Many of these youth are hired during the summer to work with elementary school students as camp coaches and summer school teachers' assistants. Summer programming for high school students focuses on academic, professional, and life-skills activities (e.g. Girls Gateway to Engineering, Event Management Internships, Baristas/Coffee Shop Training, Red Cross Training, and computer courses).

Summer programs also include targeted academic supports. Mt. Hood Community College, for instance, teaches credit-recovery classes at Parkrose. Incoming 9th grade students can participate in Jump Start, a reading and study skills course that helps prepare them for high school achievement. Several dozen middle and high school students attend an intensive summer course for English language learners.

A community advisory board (school staff, parents, students, and partner agency representatives) helps to coordinate, integrate, and manage the many resources at Parkrose. SUN CS maintains daily communication with parents and hosts school-wide parent meetings and activities. The school extends educational opportunities to parents as well, including ESL classes, Home Buyers Workshops, computer courses, and Latino Parent Nights. A school-based health clinic also offers comprehensive services to students and their families.

PARTNERSHIPS: Focus on College Preparation

The College and Career Center at Parkrose is staffed by a full-time, certified counselor who works with students individually and inside classrooms to connect them to the experiences or next steps they need. Through the Center's ASPIRE Program, volunteer

mentors from the community are trained to work one-on-one with youth and help them navigate their way successfully through high school and beyond. A local community college sends volunteers to Parkrose to assist seniors through the college application process. The Center's web site provides ongoing college and career-related resources and opportunities for students and parents. The site's "Alumni Voices" links students to blogs from members of the Parkrose Class of 2008 who were invited to keep an online diary about their college experiences.

LEADERSHIP

Principal Roy Reynolds reflects, "SUN CS provides such a wide variety of services; when I need support for specific subgroups [of students], it's easy for me to connect to the right agency who has those resources. In a traditional high school, it's hard to look outside the school walls. But the whole idea of working outside our silos—that's something that's pretty ingrained here. We figure out what we need and then have to look at our budget and what partners are available so we can provide the best, most efficient services for our kids."

The principal and SUN Community School site manager have worked closely together to integrate these initiatives into a well-coordinated approach to raising student achievement. "I'm a structure guy. But the bottom line is that it's not just what the structure is, but what happens inside the classroom," concludes Reynolds.

RESULTS

In the last several years, Parkrose has seen its dropout rate fall from 8 percent to as low as 2 percent in 2006. Of the 566 students regularly participating in SUN CS activities in 2007-08, 79 percent increased benchmarks in reading and 69 percent increased benchmarks in math. The average daily attendance of SUN CS students is 91 percent. According to teachers, of the students who regularly attended SUN CS activities: 81 percent improved getting homework in on time, 90 percent had a more positive attitude toward school, 81 percent improved classroom participation, and 78 percent improved on finding alternative resolutions to problems. Under Oregon's new graduation formula, 72 percent of Parkrose's 2008 seniors graduated, compared to Portland Public Schools' district-wide rate of 54 percent and the state-wide rate of 68 percent. ❖

Case Study 5

Foster High School Tukwila, Washington

Foster High School

Tukwila, Washington

Student Population: 900

Demographics

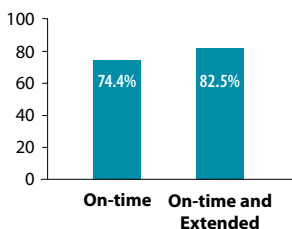
- ▶ 31% African-American
- ▶ 31% White
- ▶ 17% Asian
- ▶ 16% Hispanic
- ▶ 2% American Indian
- ▶ 2% Pacific Islander
- ▶ Over 65 different languages spoken among students

Located just south of Seattle, Tukwila was recently identified by the New York Times as the most racially diverse school district in the United States.

<http://www.tukwila.wednet.edu/>

SELECTED RESULTS

Percent of Students Graduating in 2007



Note: Both rates are slightly higher than Washington's state-wide average.

BACKGROUND

In Tukwila, Washington, all of the city's 2,700 K–12 students and their families are served by the Tukwila Community Schools Collaboration (CSC). CSC supports a site manager at each school in the Tukwila School District who works closely with teachers and administrators, social support personnel and community members to create a climate that supports student achievement, emotional and social well being, skills development, and a sense of hope for the future. Home to a large immigrant and refugee population, Foster High School enrolls a number of students who have had no prior formal education.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Cultural Leadership and Academic Supports

Community school programming regularly engages over 400 of the school's 900 students through several key initiatives. The formation of a Multicultural Action Committee (MAC) was driven by the youth of Foster. Through MAC, groups of students display art and other cultural exhibits throughout the school and host a cultural cooking class to highlight a different cultural cuisine each month. MAC student leaders host an end-of-the-year cultural world's fair, where students celebrate their diversity by sharing food, music, dance and poetry with classmates and community members.

Assistant Principal Daryl Wright reflects, "The cultural assemblies are student-focused. Students are excited to attend, and when kids are excited and have the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities, then they become more engaged at school. [MAC Assemblies] are helping us to connect with the community, too. It's brought a hopeful feel to the building."

After School Study Table offers students the opportunity to work with teachers and volunteer tutors from the University of Washington to receive homework help and further develop academic skills. Teachers and tutors monitor students' progress, connect with student counselors, and find opportunities for youth internships. Wright comments, "The after school program serves as one of our only activities in which students can work directly with their teachers to receive the extra support they need." In addition to the three school counselors at Foster, two outside agencies—Renton Area Youth Services and Ruth Dykeman Children's Center—offer extra counseling resources at the school.



The Tukwila District has adopted the AVID Program, which targets a cohort of students in the academic middle—B, C, and D students—who have a strong desire to attend college. From 6th to 12th grade, these students receive extra support and elective classes, during the school day and after school, to help them achieve in high school and beyond.

CSC has also established a partnership between the county's Youth Workforce Program and the school district to offer credit retrieval programs aligned with part-time jobs during the summer. For example, Foster students needing a science credit will be taught by a certified teacher during the mornings and engaged in environmental restoration projects in the afternoon.

PARTNERSHIP: Focus on Health Services and Family Engagement

Health services are provided to students and their families through the support of CSC's community health coordinator, who is incorporating healthy living skills into all community schools programming. Health focused initiatives include free or reduced-cost physicals, free immunizations, and asthma screening and orientations. Seeing that there were no primary dental clinics in Tukwila, the coordinator established a dental collaborative with partners from the University of Washington and other providers to conduct screenings for all students in the district.

Through CSC, health services have been provided for over 500 students and family members. Additionally, the community school has helped increase parent participation in getting health care for their families. "These resources are particularly critical as the county recently reduced funding for health services by 44 percent," said CSC's Community School Director Lynda Hall. In collaboration with the American Lung Association, Foster also offers a peer education program, Teens Against Tobacco Use, through which students learn not only about the hazards of tobacco use but also about asthma prevention, obesity, diabetes, and nutrition.

CSC's family programming and other community-wide events are hosted by the nearby middle school, which has received additional grant funding to be established as the community hub. CSC engages over 300 Tukwila families each month through language specific parent nights, adult education classes, school

navigation, a community liaison program, connection to city resources, and civic engagement. Community liaisons work with CSC staff to improve communication between parents and the school, particularly for Somali and Spanish speaking families. Liaisons coordinate meetings and workshops to help parents acquire skills that will support their child(ren)'s education as well as access community resources.

LEADERSHIP

Tukwila's Community Schools Collaboration began in 2001 as a collaborative public-private partnership that engaged school and community partners in developing programming. CSC is now a non-profit agency that has received solid leadership and support from its partner principals as well as the current and previous superintendents of the Tukwila District.

Representing the leadership that Foster instills in its youth, in 2007, senior Mycal Ford accompanied CSC staff and Tukwila's then superintendent to an awards ceremony on Capitol Hill. Ford spoke about his community school experience: "Through our community school, I was offered the opportunity to teach middle schoolers hip hop dance.... What the community school provides for these students is not just hip hop after school, but a [high school] student to look up to... and a sense of community, a sense of belonging, a sense of want, a sense of family.... It's been a pleasure and an opportunity and an astounding feeling to teach these students." Ford now attends Pacific Lutheran University on full scholarship.

RESULTS

As a result of growing community school efforts, Foster had an on-time graduation rate of 74.4 percent and an 82.5 percent extended graduation rate in 2006–07, both of which are several points higher than Washington's state-wide average. Based on success in Tukwila, CSC received funding to expand their programs into several schools of the nearby Highline School District. ❖

Case Study 6

Community Links High School

Chicago, Illinois

Student Population: 134

Demographics:

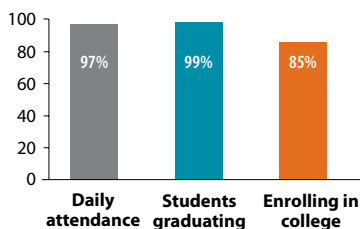
- ▶ 100% Hispanic
- ▶ 100% Free and Reduced Lunch
- ▶ 12% English Language Learners
- ▶ 7.5% Special Education

Community Links High School is housed inside John Spry Community School, located in the heart of the Little Village community, where the majority of the population is bilingual.

<http://www.comlinkshs.org/>

SELECTED RESULTS

Percentage of Attendance, Graduation, and College Enrollment since 2006



Community Links High School

Chicago, Illinois

BACKGROUND

Built in 1898, John Spry School has served children from the Little Village community of southwest Chicago for many years. Yet, many of Spry's students would graduate in the 8th grade, get a job to help support their families, and never complete high school.

In 2003, former principal of Spry, Dr. Carlos Azcoitia, approached the District CEO about adding a high school to Spry, creating a comprehensive community school from preschool through secondary school. Azcoitia met with community members, parents, the local school council, teachers, and students to discuss the design of a shared community building with an innovative, "no failure" high school. Today, Spry's Community Links High School has achieved a graduation rate of nearly 100 percent.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Commitment to Post-Secondary Success

Spry has designed a unique schedule—while elementary students start at 9 a.m., classes for high school students begin later each day. High school students have an extended eight-hour day and attend school year-round, in order to graduate in just three years. As a public, neighborhood school, Spry's Community Links High School (CLHS) provides a unique opportunity for students and families from the community who are committed to success.

Post-secondary goals are embedded in the school's culture. Students and their parents make a commitment to complete high school and enroll in college. If students are struggling, they come in on Saturdays or early mornings for tutoring. Youth are taken on college and university visits beginning their freshman year. During their first year, high school students serve as tutors and classroom assistants in preK–2nd grade rooms. According to teachers, interaction with older students provides a fun and deeper level of engagement for the children, and being bilingual allows the students to truly connect to each other. Students also participate in a Junior ROTC program that fosters teamwork, self-discipline, respect, and leadership.

During their second year, all high school students are placed as interns in the community, including the local hospital, library, Boys & Girls Club, and private businesses. Working two or three mornings before their school day starts, youth receive job skills and academic credit while being exposed to a range of careers. During their third and final year, all high school students participate in the College Bridge program, enrolling in college level classes for dual credit at nearby institutions



including National Louis University, University of Illinois Chicago, Roosevelt University, De Paul and Loyola.

CLHS aims to develop its young people to be leaders in their own community through service learning that connects them to issues affecting their neighborhood.

Students have advocated for legislative changes and the building of a new public library, participated in peace marches, hosted a Safety Forum, and engaged in other community development activities.

A mentorship program engages volunteer community members to work with students in the afternoons. The school has also partnered with several nearby universities to bring undergraduate and graduate students into the school, further immersing CLHS youth into the post-secondary culture. Several of these higher educational institutions have committed to providing scholarships and financial aid for CLHS students. Additionally, Azcoitia developed a College Fund to assist Community Links students and families who are not eligible for certain scholarships.

PARTNERSHIPS: Connecting Parents to the School and the School to the Community

“We have the highest expectations,” says Azcoitia. “Our theme is that the greatest influence on the student is the family. And the greatest influence on the family is the community. So it is very important to develop a school to meet community needs.”

Community Links High School enjoys a high level of parent engagement and provides families with a range of community resources. Through the school’s 21st Century Community Learning Center grant, CLHS has partnered with the Boys & Girls Club, located directly across the school’s playground, to provide additional after school programs for students. The school also provides many after school clubs, sports and recreational activities, such as Salsa dancing. Adult literacy, English as a Second Language, math, and computer classes are also offered at the school on evenings and Saturdays.

“When our students go to their church, to the Boys & Girls Club, to their homes, and the message of education is reinforced, then the opportunities for success are greater,” comments Azcoitia. “I think it empowers us. We know it’s extra work, but we have to share the work. And that’s what counts.”

Spry also partners with Latinos United for Priorities in Education (LUPE), which focuses on Latino student achievement from early childhood through postsecondary education. LUPE hosts meetings in the school and represents the interests of the community back to the District.

In partnership with Alivio Medical Center, Spry has been able to offer medical services for students and their families during health fairs and other school-wide events. Last year, the partnership received a health foundation grant to build a health clinic at the school. Alivio staffs the clinic, providing comprehensive services for young people and their parents, including routine physical exams and immunizations.

LEADERSHIP

The vision of Community Links High School is 100 percent high school and post-secondary graduation. Principal Francisco Barros reflects on the urgency of this vision: “A 100 percent graduation rate is about social justice. We are opening the door to a new generation of students, who will then continue to open doors for generations to come.”

When the high school program began in 2003, 30 percent of the elementary-aged students at the school were meeting or exceeding standards; now rates are at 73 percent. Being located in the same building allows middle and high school teachers to plan their curricula together. The teachers and principal recognize that the better their students do in elementary school, the more prepared they are for high school success.

RESULTS

And the signs of success are clear. Since graduating its first class in 2006, Community Links High School has maintained a 99 percent graduation rate, with an 85 percent college-going rate. CLHS also has a 97 percent daily attendance rate. In the summer of 2009, Azcoitia will help launch a new high school program at nearby Mason School, modeled after Spry Community Links High School. ❖

Case Study 7

Little Village Lawndale High School Campus

Chicago, Illinois

Student Population: 1,355

Demographics:

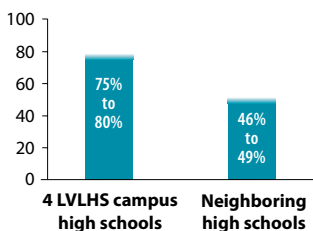
- ▶ 78% Latino
- ▶ 21% African-American
- ▶ 92% Free and Reduced Lunch
- ▶ 9% English Language Learners

Located on Chicago's Southside, LVLHS's campus serves the communities of Little Village, a predominately Mexican community, and North Lawndale, a predominately African-American community.

<http://www.lvlhs.org/>

SELECTED RESULTS

Percent of Seniors on Track to Graduate in 2009



Note: In the spring of 2009, each LVLHS school graduated its first senior class.

Little Village Lawndale High School Campus

Chicago, Illinois

BACKGROUND

The Little Village Lawndale campus had a dramatic beginning. According to the campus web site, “On May 13th, 2001, fourteen community residents of Little Village neighborhood staged a 19-day hunger strike demanding the construction of a new high school. The high school had been promised, but was put on hold for monetary issues. Almost four years later the Little Village Lawndale High School (LVLHS) Campus opened its doors to four hundred students.”

Today, the LVLHS campus is comprised of four autonomous high schools that collectively serve approximately 1,350 students. All four schools are public, neighborhood schools, each with its own administration and a special focus—Social Justice; Multicultural Arts; Infinity Math, Science, and Technology; and World Language.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Academic Support, Youth Development, and Healthy Families

Much collaboration occurs among the schools as well as from the resources that Enlace Chicago brings as the lead community school partner. While the learning communities are specific to each theme of the school, many facilities are shared across the campus. For example, students share the library, swimming pool, auditorium, dance studio, gyms, health center, long distance learning labs, and literacy center. All students participate in the same sports and after school activities. Thus, students get the advantage of a tight-knit school environment without sacrificing the advantages of a larger facility. This structure also allows for the schools to be shut down while the common space remains open for community events.

Enlace Chicago works with the schools to allocate district funding for extra academic support based on each school's needs. For example, one school now requires every teacher to provide tutoring after school. Additionally, a drop-in student resource center is available in the common library from 2–6 p.m., offering students homework help, research and internet access, and a space to hang out.

“We try for all [community school] programs to have a civic engagement component as well as foster leadership development,” says Rudy Lozano, the senior resource coordinator at LVLHS. For example, campus students go to nearby elementary schools to serve as peer educators and mentors for younger students. During last summer's Youth Leadership Development Program, students learned about the Civil Rights Movement and its connection to the current immigration movement. “In a school that is over 70 percent Latino and 20 percent African-

American, this historic connection becomes very real to them,” comments Lozano. After returning from a civil rights tour through the South last summer, these students worked on voter registration in their community and also held press conferences after school, discussing their experiences and how to connect history to overcoming current struggles such as racial violence. Some of these students also formed a Youth Violence Prevention Group.

Enlace has collaborated with the four principals—Rito Martinez, Jose Rico, Martha Irizarry, and Alice Phillips—to keep the sites open Monday through Thursday until 8 p.m. and on Saturdays, as well as to offer adult education classes for the entire community (e.g., ESL, computer literacy). Enlace also received a grant to open a school-based health center, with services provided by Alivio Medical Center. The health center’s comprehensive services have aided approximately 700 students so far, as well as many siblings and other family members.

PARTNERSHIPS: Focus on College Preparation and Career Exploration

The LVLHS campus was founded with a focus on college preparedness and mentorship, and two of the schools were provided a post-secondary coach through the district. Enlace Chicago received a grant from Citibank to provide post-secondary advisors to the other two schools. These advisors collaborate with the school counselors but are able to provide more individualized student attention—they work with every senior to submit at least five college or university applications, as well as apply for financial aid and scholarships. LVLHS also has a partnership with GEAR-UP, which follows a cohort of students from the 6th grade through the 10th grade, providing additional college-prep resources to these young people and their families.

During the summer, Enlace Chicago offers stipend-based programs for 80 to 100 students, focused on students’ individual career-based aspirations. “Our program instructors are helping students to see how they can connect their passions into opportunities for college and for life,” says Director of Education for Enlace Chicago Katya Nuques. Since there are many competing internship programs across Chicago during the school year, and because of limited finances, Enlace decided to offer these summer

stipends to students who regularly participate in after school programs during the school year. Summer programming focuses on four themes: youth leadership, internships, mural arts/visual arts, and teaching careers. *Teach*, a program in partnership with Illinois State University (ISU), aims to develop an education pipeline: increasing the number of high school students who go to ISU, become teachers, and stay to teach in the neighborhood.

Enlace has partnered with more than 16 organizations—nonprofits, health centers, corporations, arts groups, and justice organizations—to provide opportunities for career exploration. According to Nuques, many positive adult-student relationships have been formed through these internships. Several organizations have hired students after their six-week internship is over; others have offered college scholarships.

LEADERSHIP

Enlace Chicago (formerly known as The Little Village Community Development Corporation) is a non-profit community development corporation formed by local residents in 1990. As lead partner for the LVLHS campus, Enlace has led a process of community engagement, organizing, and collaboration that has mobilized significant partnerships and resources for students and their families. Each school has an oversight committee, or governing body, made up of the principal, teachers, and representatives from Enlace, students, and parents.

RESULTS

Across the four schools on the LVLHS campus, there is a 90 percent daily attendance rate and less than one percent truancy rate. “While our test scores are pretty similar to other schools in Chicago,” Nuques comments, “our graduation rates show that [our approach] is working.” In the spring of 2009, each school graduated its first senior class. According to the four principals, 75–80 percent of all seniors were on track for graduation (compared to other neighborhood high schools, whose rates are in the upper 40s). Lozano reports that many students jumped onto the early application process and were accepted into more than one college. Roosevelt University gave eight graduating seniors from Social Justice High School full, four-year scholarships for when they attend the University in the fall. ❖

Case Study 8

Sayre High School

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Sayre High School

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Student Population: 650

Demographics:

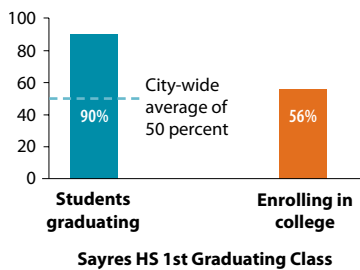
- ▶ 99% African-American
- ▶ 85% Free and Reduced Lunch
- ▶ 20% Special Education

Only 19% of individuals over the age of 25 in the neighborhoods surrounding Sayre carry a high school diploma, while only 4% hold a Bachelor's degree.

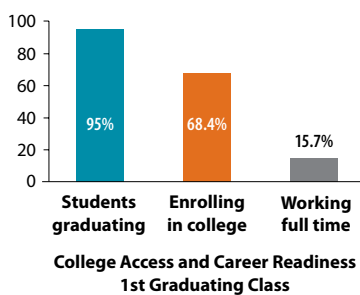
www.philasd.org/schools/sayre/

SELECTED RESULTS

Percentage Graduating and Enrolling in College: 2007 (n=80)



Percent of Graduates and Their Post-Graduate Outcomes: 2008 (n=19)



Note: In 2009, 84 percent of graduates who participated in College Access and Career Readiness (n=19) are college bound.

www.communityschools.org

BACKGROUND

Sayre High School engages hundreds of youth and community members of all ages—as well as hundreds of college students—in its school-day, after-school, and summer programs, with a particular focus on health sciences education and college and career readiness. With the Netter Center for Community Partnerships at the University of Pennsylvania as the lead coordinating partner, this university-assisted community school represents a unique and highly effective integration of city, school, community, and university resources.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES: Hands-On Curriculum and Real-World Connections

The school-day partnership involves faculty, staff, and students from across the University working at Sayre. The multidisciplinary character of the program enables the work to be integrated into the curricula of both the public school and the University, assuring an educational focus as well as sustainability. Each year, more than 350 Penn students enter Sayre as co-learners and role models for younger students.

Through the Netter Center's Moelis Access Science Program, for example, Penn student fellows work with Sayre teachers to make the best use of their current resources, while also introducing a variety of supplemental resources, to create engaging labs and experiential activities. One Sayre teacher commented, "On a number of occasions I did not have enough time or manpower to do certain activities or to teach certain skills. Through the Access Science program, undergraduate and medical students from the University visited my classes to provide the extra assistance needed to get all students actively engaged. With this help, students were given the special, one-on-one attention they desire and often need."

The Health Sciences Pipeline, a partnership with Penn's Medical and Nursing Schools, enables Sayre's core science curriculum to have hands-on, inquiry-based, and small group learning and it exposes students to the health professions. There are currently three subdivisions of the Pipeline program, each with its own specific science discipline and corresponding grade level. In Neuroscience Pipeline, the oldest and most developed division, undergraduate and first and fourth year medical students teach basic anatomy and brain function once a week in each of Sayre's 10th grade biology classes. A cohort of 10th grade students travel to Penn's School of Medicine to continue their exploration of neuroscience through work in university laboratories.



PARTNERSHIPS: Continuing Connections After School

Sayre offers a safe space until 8 p.m. for its students as well as the students of its feeder elementary schools. Young people participate in a myriad of academic, fitness, and college and career preparation activities.

Addressing a pressing community need, the Netter Center's College Access and Career Readiness program provides high school students with four years of comprehensive, organized, and sequential college and career development, as well as the academic supports to succeed in these pathways. Paid internships place approximately 70 students at various locations—their school, the University of Pennsylvania Health System (UPHS), Penn's campus, the Sayre Health Center or local businesses—to develop critical thinking, service-learning, and problem-solving skills.

Students also receive intensive mentoring. College and Career Pathways Sessions engage over 100 Sayre students in real-world discussions, hands-on workshops, and academic support to prepare them for post-secondary challenges, opportunities, and choices while supporting their success in their internship and academic courses. Academic Growth Plans require students to work closely with an advisor to map out specific academic goals and monitor progress. The program also pairs Sayre students with Penn mentors to help them prepare for the SATs, navigate through the college application process, and apply for scholarships.



The Netter Center's Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative aims to improve health in the community through school day nutrition education and access to healthy foods and regular physical activity. High school interns work after school and during the summer to teach healthy cooking lessons to all ages. The program also employs student interns in Sayre's school garden, whose produce is sold at local farmers' markets.

The Sayre Health Center opened in fall 2007. This federally funded health center provides students and community members both clinical and educational services on site. Penn doctors and medical students staff the center, which currently has over 3,100 users. As a result of the growing relationship between Sayre, the Netter Center, and Penn's School of Medicine, \$1.2 million of in-kind labor and construction was leveraged for the Health Center. The

Health Center also supports eight students interns who are involved with local educational outreach and learning medical intake procedures.

Principal Gayle Daniels comments, "Staff and students from Penn provide mentorship, exposure, and real-world connections for our students in a way that motivates them not only to succeed in school but to pursue their passions through post-secondary education or a career."

LEADERSHIP

The Netter Center aims to establish long-term community school partnerships by leveraging resources to address the needs of the community while supporting the core goals of the partners—particularly their educational missions. To that end, a considerable number and variety of Penn academically based community service courses have been designed that are directly linked to the Sayre program. Since they are performing community service while engaged in academic research, teaching and learning, Penn students are simultaneously practicing their specialized skills and developing, to some extent at least, their moral and civic consciousness.

Sayre's youth council and community advisory board provide ongoing feedback to community school staff on program development, resources, outreach, and community organizing.

RESULTS

After completing its transition from middle to high school in 2006–07, Sayre's first senior class of 80 students had a 90 percent graduation rate (compared to a city-wide rate around 50 percent). Of these graduates, 56 percent enrolled in post-secondary education, and community school partners helped secure more than \$50,000 in scholarships. As the high school has grown, it has experienced a decreased rate of students on track to graduate—one of the reasons leading to the Netter Center's launch of its College Access and Career Readiness Program in 2007–08. Of the 19 seniors in the program's first year, 95 percent graduated on time, 68.4 percent enrolled in a two-year or four-year college, and 15.7 percent secured a full-time job upon graduation. In 2009, 84 percent of the program's 19 seniors were college bound. The Netter Center received a significant grant from the AT&T Foundation in April 2009 to continue expanding its program to reach more freshman students at Sayre. ❖

PUBLICATIONS

The following Coalition for Community Schools documents are available online at www.communityschools.org under the Resources section.

ARTICLES AND BRIEFS

["Surrounded by Support," American Federation of Teachers Magazine—American Educator \[Summer 2009\]](#)

This special issue brings together researchers, historians, educators, and service providers to describe the need for, and effective development of, school-community partnerships.

[Community Schools Across the Nation: A Sampling of Local Initiatives and National Models \[2009\]](#)

Martin J. Blank and Sarah S. Pearson

Community schools are alive and growing, serving millions of students across the nation. Today, there are a number of national models and local initiatives that create their own flavor of community school. This brief provides an overview of leading initiatives.

[Community Schools: The United Way \[2009\]](#)

Sarah S. Pearson

The United Way of Greater Lehigh Valley, a Coalition for Community School partner, has been perfecting their matchmaking skills. This report provides details of their work with schools and communities.

[The Community Agenda for America's Public Schools \[September 2008\]](#)

The Community Agenda is an action plan to ensure that all children enter school healthy, ready to learn and succeed in school, as well as to prepare students to pursue post-secondary education and become productive family and community members. It focuses on the vital need to improve the lives of struggling youth, families, and communities through school/community partnerships that support student outcomes.

["Special Focus on Community Schools: How Schools Engage Their Communities to Strengthen Learning," The National Parents Teachers Association Magazine—Our Children \[February/March 2007\]](#)

The Coalition for Community Schools and other contributors prepared several articles and case studies to illustrate the work of community schools. These articles help visualize how PTA can play a role in developing closer relationships between schools, families and communities.

["The Will to Change: A Conversation about Schools and Learning with James Comer and Edmund Gordon" \[October 2006\]](#)

In this Coalition publication, Dr. James Comer and Professor Edmund Gordon engage in a thought-provoking dialogue on the educational challenges and political inequities facing America's students and families.

["Good Schools Can Happen," Parade Magazine \[August 27, 2006\]](#)

This article shows how five communities are making sure their children get a quality education. The key is to get everyone involved: parents, teachers, business leaders, and local residents.

["Community Schools: Engaging Parents and Families," The National Parents Teachers Association Magazine—Our Children \[January/February 2004\]](#)

Olga Heifets and Martin J. Blank

This article includes ideas for PTAs and local community groups on how community schools help engage families.

["Community Schools: Educators and Community Sharing Responsibility for Student Learning," Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Infobrief \[January 2004\]](#)

Authors Marty Blank and Bela Shah look at what the research tells us about how community schools help young people succeed.

["System Change Through Community Schools," American Association of School Administrators Magazine—The School Administrator \[January 2004\]](#)

Martin J. Blank and Dan Cady

The article describes how superintendents in four, small to mid-size districts used community schools to braid state and community services to solve problems of family mobility, insufficient health care, and unsafe neighborhoods.

COMMENTARIES

[Creating a Culture of Attachment: A Community-as-Text Approach to Learning \[December 2004\]](#)

Milbrey McLaughlin and Martin J. Blank

This commentary reflects the Coalition's perspective that engaging and motivating young people to learn is essential for their academic and life success.

["Community Schools: A Vision of Learning that Goes Beyond Testing," Education Week \[April 2002\]](#)

Martin J. Blank and Ira Harkavy

Research and experience confirm what common sense suggests: What happens outside the classroom is every bit as important as what happens inside.

POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND TOOLS

[A Handbook for State Policy Leaders—Community Schools: Improving Student Learning/ Strengthening Schools, Families, and Communities \[2002\]](#)

This Coalition handbook is designed to help state leaders form vital connections between schools and communities that improve student learning. It is helpful to the work of policy leaders in cities, counties, local school districts, and philanthropy.

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

[Community Schools Research Brief \[2009\]](#)

Sarah S. Pearson and Reuben Jacobson

A growing body of research suggests that fidelity to the community school strategy yields compounding benefits for students, families, and community. Community school students show significant gains in academic achievement and in essential areas of nonacademic development.

["Community Schools: Promoting Student Success, A Rationale and Results Framework" \[2006\]](#)

This report outlines a rationale for community schools as a primary vehicle for increasing student and strengthening families and communities, as well as defining the results that community schools seek.

["Community and Family Engagement: Principals Share What Works" \[October 2006\]](#)

Amy C. Berg, Atelia Melaville, and Martin J. Blank

Principals are turning increasingly to the community to help them engage families, share resources, and meet standards. Informed by the work of principals, this paper finds six keys to community engagement that help school leaders engage families, staff, partners, and the larger community in the life of the school.

[All Together Now: Sharing Responsibility for the Whole Child \[July 2006\]](#)

Martin J. Blank and Amy Berg

This paper was commissioned by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the largest national professional development organization in education, as part of their work around the concept of supporting the Whole Child.

["Growing Community Schools: The Role of Cross-Boundary Leadership" \[April 2006\]](#)

Martin J. Blank, Amy Berg, and Atelia Melaville

Leaders from schools, cities, and counties across the nation are working together in new ways to "grow" community schools. This report profiles 11 communities where this work is taking place. These leaders are installing and increasing the numbers of community schools as quickly as possible, using a powerful vision with a clear focus on results and an effort to make the best possible use of all the assets their communities can offer.

["Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship" \[January 2006\]](#)

Martin J. Blank, Amy Berg and Atelia Melaville

This report makes the case that community-based learning addresses the problems of boredom and disengagement by involving students in real-world problem solving that is relevant and meaningful. This approach brings together a collection of teaching and learning strategies, including service learning, place-based education, environment-based education, civic education, work-based learning, and academically based community service.

[Making the Difference: Research and Practice in Community Schools](#)

Atelia Melaville, Bela P. Shah, and Martin J. Blank

The report features evaluation data from twenty different community school initiatives and offers a synthesis of their combined results.

[Community Schools: Partnerships for Excellence](#)

Atelia Melaville

Using public schools as a hub, inventive, enduring relationships among educators, families, community volunteers, business, health and social service agencies and youth development organizations are changing the educational landscape by transforming traditional schools into partnerships for excellence.

[Evaluation of Community Schools: An Early Look](#)

Joy Dryfoos

This evaluation describes what a community school looks like, summarizes what we know about the impact of community schools on a range of results, and highlights three recent evaluations of community school initiatives.

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